

# A Child's Day: 2006 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)

*Household Economic Studies*

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth report examining children's well-being and their daily activities both at home and at school based on data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Since the SIPP data are now available for various years between 1998 and 2006, this report highlights trends in parental interaction with children, children's participation in extracurricular activities, and school engagement. This report focuses on two outcome measures: (1) school engagement and (2) whether children are academically on-track. Further, it considers the relative importance of characteristics such as race, Hispanic origin, and parental education on those outcomes.

The data in this report were collected by the U.S. Census Bureau from June through September 2006 as part of the child well-being topical module in the eighth wave (interview) of the 2004 Panel of the SIPP.<sup>1</sup> The population represented is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The 2006 data were collected from a national sample of 12,755 "designated parents" (see definition box) and their 23,587 children, which represented 73.2 million children living in households with at least one designated parent.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A description of the SIPP survey design and the wording of the questions on the child well-being topical module can be found at <[www.census.gov/sipp/](http://www.census.gov/sipp/)>. Since, this is the first time data collection for the child well-being topical module has taken place in the summer, there may be some minor comparability issues with prior surveys.

<sup>2</sup>The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

## Designated Parent

Respondents in the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) child well-being topical module are parents of children under 18 years old. In households where both parents are present, the mother is the designated parent. Questions for each child are asked of the designated parent. If the mother is not available for an interview, the father of the child can give proxy responses for her. In single-parent families, the resident parent is the designated parent. If neither parent is in the household, the guardian is the designated parent. Designated parents include biological, step, and adoptive parents, and may also include other relatives or nonrelatives acting as a guardian for the child in the absence of parents. In this module, 96 percent of the children had a female designated parent, usually the mother. Data obtained from males who were the designated parent are included with the data from females. Respondents 15 to 17 years old, who themselves may be parents, have their childhood well-being history reported by their parents when they live with them in the household. In this report, unless otherwise noted, the term parent is used to refer to the designated parent.

## Current Population Reports

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## PARENTAL INTERACTION

Research shows that positive parental involvement has a direct influence on children, which results in fewer behavioral problems.<sup>3</sup> This section examines four indicators of the degree of parental involvement: (1) family television rules, (2) parents spending time talking or playing with children, (3) the extent to which parents praise their children, and (4) the number of days parents eat dinner with their children.

## Television Viewing

Numerous studies have pointed to an association between children's television viewing habits and aggressive behavior.<sup>4</sup> Other research shows links between television watching and eating disorders among girls and junk food consumption.<sup>5</sup> While the SIPP data does not permit any correlations between television viewing and behavior, it does provide a measure of parental control over children's viewing habits.

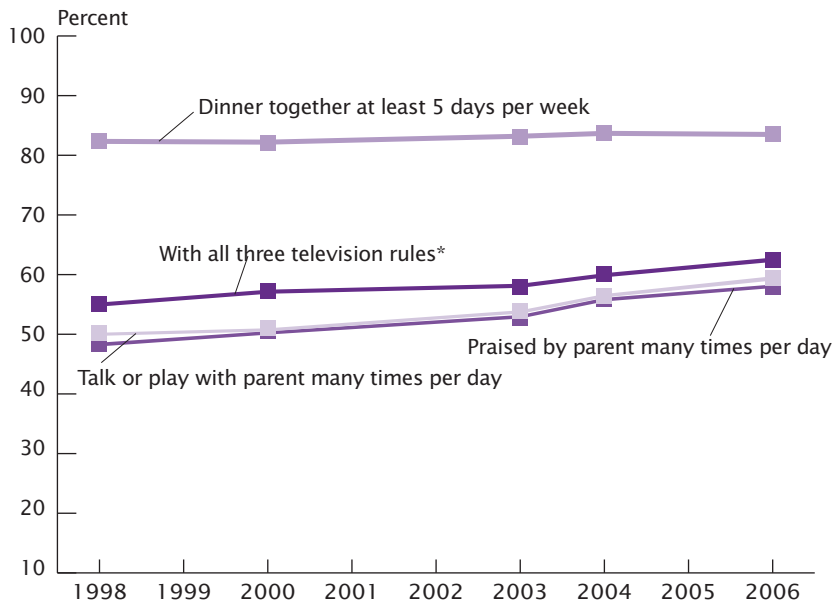
<sup>3</sup> For more detailed discussions of the effects of parental involvement on children, see P.R. Amato and F. Rivera, "Paternal Involvement and Children's Behavior Problems," *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 1999, pp. 375-384 and T.M. Videon and C.K. Manning, "Influences on Adolescent Eating Patterns: The Importance of Family Meals," *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol. 32, 2003, pp. 365-373.

<sup>4</sup> A.C. Huston, E. Donnerstein, H. Fairchild, N.D. Feshbach, P.A. Katz, J. P. Murray, E.A. Rubinstein, B. Wilcox and D. Zuckerman, *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 1992. R. Felson, "Media Effects on Violent Behavior," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 22, 1996, pp. 103-128. J. Johnson, P. Cohen, E. Smailes, S. Kasen, J. S. Brook, "Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior During Adolescence and Adulthood," *Science*, New Series, Vol. 296, No. 5564, March 29, 2002, pp. 2468-71. J.P. Murray, "Media Violence: The Effects are Both Real and Strong," *The American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 51, No. 8, April 2008, pp. 1212-30.

<sup>5</sup> C. Moriarty, K. Harrison, "Television Exposure and Disordered Eating Among Children: A Longitudinal Panel Study," *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 58, No. 2, June 2008, pp. 361-81. H. Dixon, M. Scully, M. Wakefield, V. White, D. Crawford, "The Effects of Television Advertisements for Junk Food versus Nutritious Food on Children's Food Attitudes and Preferences," *Social Science & Medicine*, Vol. 65, No. 7, October 2007, pp. 1311-23.

Figure 1.

### Percent of Children With Selected Indicators of Parental Involvement: 1998-2006



\* 3-17 years old.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Panels 1996, 2001, and 2004; Child Well-Being Topical Modules.

Parents were asked if they placed any restriction on their children's television viewing—rules about the type of program children could watch, the time of day (how early or late) the television was on, and the number of hours they could watch. Parental restrictions on watching television have increased in recent years. From 1998 to 2006, the percent of children 3 to 17 years old with all three television rules went from 55 percent to 63 percent (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup> Older children were less likely to have all three restrictions placed on their television viewing compared with younger children (Table 1). About 49 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds had all three television rules, compared with 72 percent of younger children age 6 to 11 years. Non-Hispanic White children (58 percent) were least likely to have all three

television rules, compared with Black (63 percent) and Hispanic children (64 percent) (Figure 2).<sup>7</sup> However, the percentages of Black and Hispanic children with all three

<sup>7</sup> Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group such as Asian may be defined as those who reported Asian and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported Asian regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone or in-combination concept). The body of this report (text, figures, and tables) shows data for people who reported they were the single-race White and not Hispanic, those who reported the single-race White, those who reported the single-race Black, and those who reported the single-race Asian. Use of the single-race populations does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. For more information, see the Census 2000 Brief Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin, 2000 (C2KBR/01-1) at <[www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html)>. Hispanics may be any race. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population are not shown in this report because of their small sample size in the SIPP. This report will refer to the White-alone population as White, the Black-alone population as Black, the Asian-alone population as Asian, and the White-alone non-Hispanic population as White non-Hispanic.

<sup>6</sup> There is no statistical difference between 2000 and 2003.

television rules are not statistically different from each other. Whether or not these television habits are related to children's academic performance will be examined in subsequent sections.

## Play and Praise

The amount of time parents and children spend together has increased in recent years, despite increases in women's labor force participation.<sup>8</sup> Research shows that adolescents who feel close to a parent are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, be sexually active, and have suicidal thoughts. In addition, these children attain higher grade point averages and are more likely to intend to go to college.<sup>9</sup>

Parents were asked how often they talk or play with their child for 5 minutes or more just for fun. The percentage of children and parents who talk or play together three or more times in a typical day increased from 50 percent in 1998 to 59 percent in 2006 (Figure 1). Girls were more likely than boys to talk or play with a parent—61 percent compared with 58 percent.<sup>10</sup> Younger children were more involved with parents than older children. Seventy-six percent of children under 6 years old, 58 percent of children 6 to 11 years old,

Table 1.

## Parental Interaction With Children Under 18 Years Old: 2006

(Numbers in thousands)

Type of interaction	Total	Age of child		
		Under 6 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years
Number of children . . . . .	73,212	24,428	23,664	25,120
Percent with all three television rules <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	56.0	70.2	72.4	48.9
Child talked or played with for five minutes or more just for fun three or more times per day . . .	59.4	75.9	57.5	45.1
Child praised by parent three or more times per day . . . . .	57.9	75.0	57.5	41.7
Percent of children who ate dinner with a parent five or more times per week . . . . .	83.6	88.1	87.1	75.8

<sup>1</sup> There were 16,517 children in the youngest age group, children 3 to 5 years old. Family television rules include which programs, how early or late, and how many hours children are allowed to watch television.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8; Child Well-Being Topical Module.

and 45 percent of children 12 to 17 years old spent time talking or playing with a parent three or more times in a typical day (Table 1). Figure 2 shows that non-Hispanic White children were the most likely to talk or play with a parent (53 percent), compared with Black and Hispanic children (50 and 48 percent, respectively).<sup>11</sup>

The percentage of children whose parents praise them three or more times per day showed a similar trend, increasing from 48 percent in 1998 to 58 percent in 2006 (Figure 1).<sup>12</sup> While 75 percent of children under 6 years old were praised three or more times per day on average, only 42 percent of children 12 to 17 years old were praised that often (Table 1). There were no statistically significant differences among racial groups by praise from parents.

<sup>11</sup> The percentage of Black and Hispanic children whose parents talked with or played with them many times per day is not statistically different.

<sup>12</sup> The percentage of children whose parents praised them three or more times per day in 1998 is not statistically different from 2000.

## Meals

Research suggests that family dinners promote health, well-being, and positive youth development among adolescents.<sup>13</sup> Higher scores on cognitive tests and fewer behavioral problems among 3- to 12-year-old children have also been linked to eating meals together.<sup>14</sup> Child health, parent-child harmony, academic achievement, increased sense of personal identity, less stress in single-parent families, and better adjustment in children after a divorce are all reported to improve when families have meals together.<sup>15</sup> Frequency of family meals also

<sup>13</sup> N. Zarrett and R.M. Lerner, "Ways to Promote the Positive Development of Children and Youth," Research-to-Results Brief, No. 2008-11, Child Trends, Washington, DC, 2008. M.E. Eisenber, R.E. Olson, D. Neumar-Sztainer, M. Story, L.H. Bearinger, "Correlations Between Family Meals and Psychosocial Well-Being Among Adolescents," *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, Vol. 58, 2004, pp. 792-796.

<sup>14</sup> S.L. Hofferth and J.F. Sandberg, "How American Children Spend Their Time," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 63, 2001, pp. 295-308.

<sup>15</sup> B.H. Fiese, T.J. Tomcho, M. Douglas, K. Josephs, S. Poltrock, and T. Baker, "A Review of 50 Years of Research on Naturally Occurring Family Routines and Rituals: Cause for Celebration?" *Journal of Family Psychology*, Vol. 16, 2002, pp. 381-390.

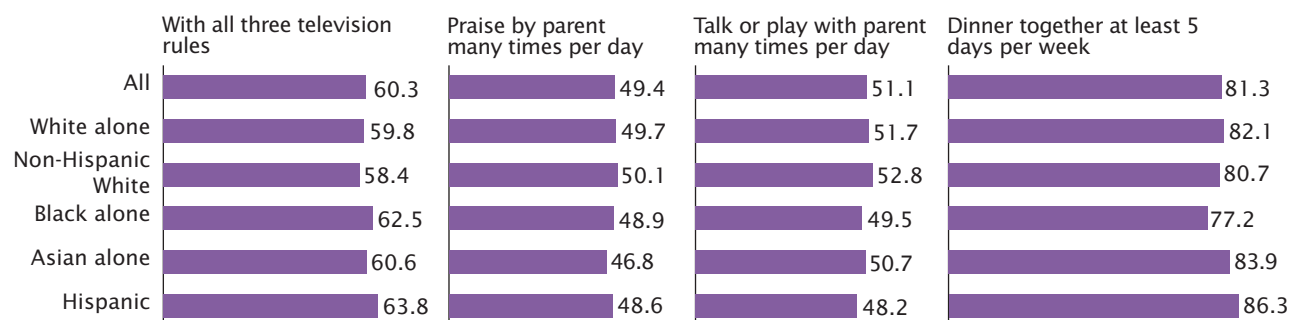
<sup>8</sup> J.F. Sandberg and S.L. Hofferth, "Changes in Children's Time with Parents: United States, 1981-1997," *Demography*, Vol. 38, No. 3, Aug 2001, pp. 423-436. Research suggests that quality time is defined as "time specifically set aside from normal daily routines for special family activities such as a vacation or . . . trip to a museum." The same study found others who defined quality time as having "intimate heart-to-heart talks." See K.A. Snyder, "A Vocabulary of Motives: Understanding How Parents Define Quality Time," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 69, May 2007, pp. 320-340.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Council of Economic Advisors 2000, "Teens and their parents in the 21st century: An Examination of Trends in Teen Behavior and the Role of Parental Involvement," Council of Economic Advisors White Paper, available on the Internet at <[http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/Teens\\_Paper\\_Final.pdf](http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/Teens_Paper_Final.pdf)>, accessed July 16, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> See Detailed Table 5 available on the Internet at <[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/2006\\_detailedtables.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/2006_detailedtables.html)>.

Figure 2.

**Percent of Children 6 to 17 Years Old with Selected Indicators of Parental Interaction by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2006**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8; Child Well-Being Topical Module.

reflects cultural differences in families.<sup>16</sup> One of the questions in the SIPP asks the number of days per week that designated parents eat dinner with their child on average.<sup>17</sup>

The percentage of children eating dinner with a designated parent five or more times per week changed very little—82 percent in 1998 compared to 84 percent in 2006 (Figure 1). Younger children were more likely to eat dinner with parents than older children. In 2006, 88 percent of children under 6 years old and 76 percent of children 12 to 17 years old ate dinner with a parent 5 days a week or more on average (Table 1).

Figure 2 shows that among children 6 to 17 years old, Hispanic children are more likely to eat dinner with a parent 5 days a week or more (86 percent) than non-Hispanic White and Black children (81 percent and 77 percent, respectively).

## PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

Looking at how children spend their time outside the home, we turn to participation in extracurricular activities and religious activities. Research shows that children involved in extracurricular activities are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior and tend to score higher on standardized tests.<sup>18</sup> In this report, data about participation in activities were limited to children 6 to 17 years old and were based on parental responses to questions about children's involvement in sports, clubs, and lessons, as well as religious activities. Participation in sports includes athletic activities sponsored by schools or by organized leagues. Clubs include Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, religious groups, Girls and Boys Clubs, or 4-H activities. Lessons were interpreted very broadly and included those taken after school or on the

weekend in subjects like music, dance, language, or computers. Participation in religious activities includes attending a religious service, religious social event, or religious education class such as Sunday school.

## Sports, Lessons, Clubs, Religious Activities

Overall, participation in sports was the most popular extracurricular activity, regardless of the children's ages. From 1998 to 2006, the percent of children who participated in sports increased from 34 percent in 1998 to 41 percent in 2006 (Figure 3). Children 12 to 17 years old were more likely to participate in sports than those 6 to 11 years old—45 percent and 39 percent, respectively (Table 2). Proportionately, more children participated in lessons in 2006, compared to 1998 (31 percent and 28 percent, respectively). Children 12 to 17 years old were less likely to participate in lessons than those 6 to 11 years old (31 percent and 33 percent, respectively). In contrast to the previous two upward trends, participation in clubs declined between 1998 and 2006 (34 percent and 31 percent, respectively). However, children 12 to 17 years old were more likely to

<sup>16</sup> Hofferth and Sandberg, 2001, Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Authors' tabulations found no significant difference across regions in the United States in the percentage of children eating dinner with a parent. Some areas may refer to the mid-day meal as dinner and the evening meal as supper. Since the SIPP asks the number of days parents eat dinner with children, time of day or evening may be irrelevant.

<sup>18</sup> A more in depth discussion is in J. Mahoney, "School Extracurricular Activity Participation as a Moderator in the Development of Antisocial Patterns," *Child Development*, Vol. 71, No. 2, March/April 2000, pp. 502–516. Further information can be found in National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care and Youth Development Research Network (NICHD), "Are Child Developmental Outcomes Related to Before- and After-School Care Arrangements? Results from the NICHD Study for Early Child Care," *Child Development*, Vol. 75, No. 1, January/February 2004, pp. 280–295.

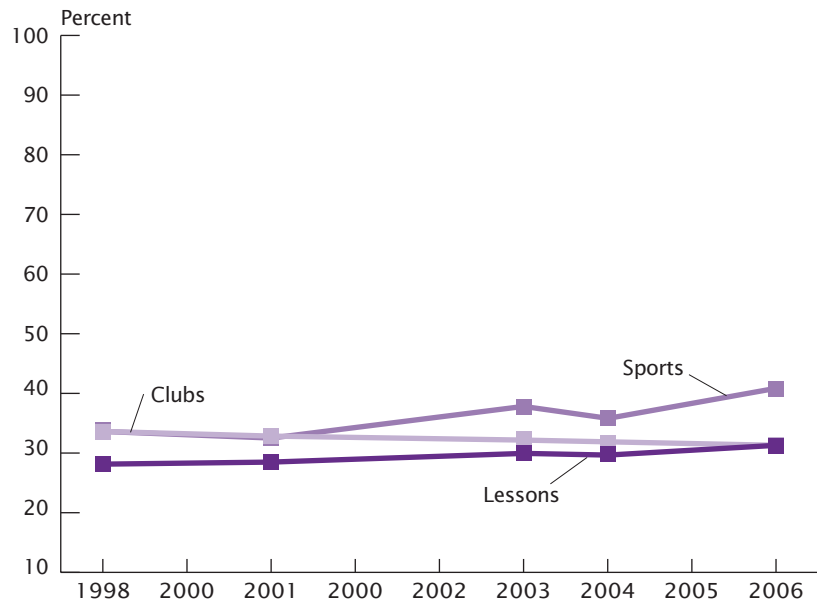
participate in clubs than those 6 to 11 years old (34 percent and 31 percent, respectively).

Research also suggests a positive association between religious activities and child well-being.<sup>19</sup> A new question was added to the 2004 SIPP Panel to attempt to measure the participation of children in religious activities. Table 2 shows that children 6 to 11 years old were more likely to participate in religious activities than children 12 to 17 years old (68 percent and 63 percent, respectively).

In general, children's participation in extracurricular activities was associated with parents having higher levels of education (Figure 4). Among children 6 to 17 years old whose parent had a bachelor's degree or more, 58 percent were involved in sports, compared with 32 percent whose parent completed high school or less. A similar pattern existed for participation in clubs, lessons, and religious activities. Forty-seven percent of children 6 to 17 years old whose parent had a bachelor's degree or more participated in clubs, compared with 22 percent of children whose parent completed high school or less. Around 21 percent of children 6 to 17 years old whose parent completed high school or less were enrolled in lessons, compared with 50 percent of children whose parent had a bachelor's degree or more. Seventy-three percent of

<sup>19</sup> L.J. Bridges and K.A. Moore, "Religious Involvement and Children's Well-Being: What Research Tells Us (And What It Doesn't)," Child Trends Research Brief, Washington, DC, 2002. M.J. Donahue and P.L. Benson, "Religion and the Well-Being of Adolescents," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 51, Summer 1995, pp. 145-60. A. Thornton and D. Camburn, "Religious Participation and Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Attitudes," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 51, No. 3, August 1989, pp. 641-653. S.J. Jang and B.R. Johnson, "Neighborhood disorder, individual religiosity, and adolescent use of illicit drugs: a test of multilevel hypotheses," *Criminology*, Vol. 39, No. 1, February 2001, pp. 109-43.

Figure 3.  
**Percent of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Involved in After-School Activities: 1998-2006**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Panels 1996, 2001, and 2004; Child Well-Being Topical Modules.

Table 2.  
**Participation of Children 6 to 17 Years Old in Extracurricular and Religious Activities: 2006**

(Numbers in thousands)

Activity	Age of child		
	Total	6 to 11 years	12 to 17
Number of children . . . . .	48,784	23,664	25,120
Percent participating in:			
Sports . . . . .	42.3	39.1	45.3
Lessons . . . . .	31.9	33.0	30.9
Clubs . . . . .	32.6	31.1	34.0
All three after school activities . . . . .	11.7	11.5	12.0
Religious activities once a month or more . . . . .	65.3	68.0	62.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8; Child Well-Being Topical Module.

children whose parent had a bachelor's degree or more participated in religious activities once a month or more, followed by 64 percent of children whose parent had some college and 62 percent of children whose parent had a high school education or less.

## SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

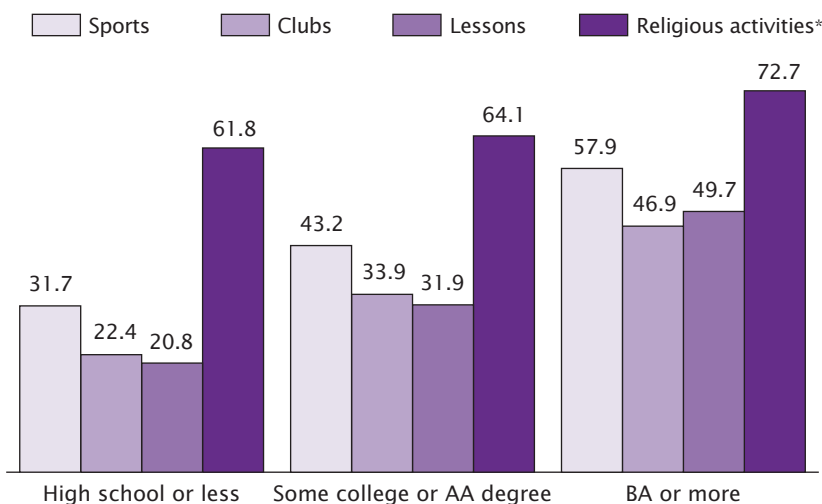
Using three questions from the SIPP child well-being topical module, Child Trends developed the school engagement index.<sup>20</sup> The questions

<sup>20</sup> Child Trends is a nonprofit research organization based in Washington, DC, <[www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)>. R. Wertheimer, K. Anderson, M. Burkhauser, "The Well-Being of Children in Working Poor and Other Families: 1997 and 2004," Research Brief, Child Trends, September 2008. See <[www.childtrends.org/Files/Child\\_Trends-2008\\_09\\_29\\_RB\\_WorkingPoor.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2008_09_29_RB_WorkingPoor.pdf)>.



Figure 4.

### Percent of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Involved in After-School Activities by Designated Parent's Education Level: 2006



\* At least once a month.

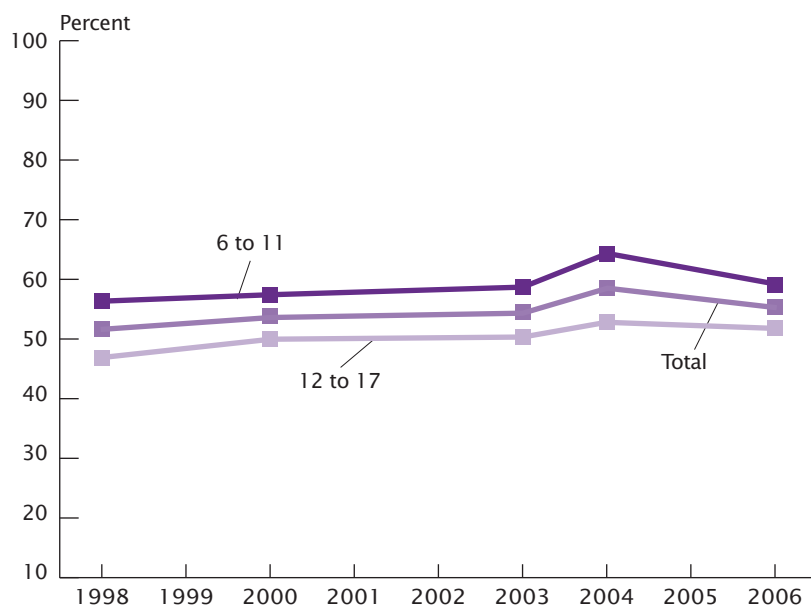
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8; Child Well-Being Topical Module.

ask the extent to which the following three statements are not true, sometimes true, or often true: (1) the child is interested in school work, (2) the child works hard in school, and (3) the child likes school. The school engagement index is the sum of the scores from zero to two for each question with “not true”=0, “sometimes”=1, and “often true”=2. Children who are highly engaged scored 6 on the school engagement index—the highest score possible.

In 1998, about half (52 percent) of children 6 to 17 years old were highly engaged in school (Figure 5). That proportion increased to a high of 59 percent in 2004, before declining to 55 percent in 2006.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the trend, younger children, those 6 to 11 years old were more likely to be highly engaged than older children, those 12 to 17 years old.

Figure 5.

### Percent of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Who Are Highly Engaged in School by Age: 1998–2006



Note: The school engagement index is a percentage of children who scored in the highest possible categories for the following three items: child's interest in schoolwork, degree that child works hard in school, and the extent to which the child likes school. Children who are highly engaged scored 6 on the school engagement index—the highest score possible.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Panels 1996, 2001 and 2004; Child Well-Being Topical Modules.

### Select Characteristics of Children Highly Engaged in School

School engagement is associated with various socioeconomic characteristics (Table 3). Looking at school engagement by race and Hispanic origin, Asians were more likely to be highly engaged (71 percent) than Hispanic (59 percent), non-Hispanic White, and Black children (54 percent each).<sup>22</sup> Children with married parents were more likely to be highly engaged than children with unmarried parents—57 percent with married parents, compared with 52 percent with separated, divorced, or widowed parents, and 49 percent with never-married parents.<sup>23</sup> Children whose parent

<sup>21</sup> The years 2000 and 2003 are not statistically different from each other. Also, the years 2003 and 2006 are not statistically different from each other.

<sup>22</sup> Non-Hispanic White and Black are not statistically different from each other.

<sup>23</sup> Single, divorced, widowed, and never married are not statistically different from each other.

Table 3.

# Percent of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Who Were Highly Engaged in School by Selected Characteristics: 2006

(Numbers in thousands)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent highly engaged	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent highly engaged	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent highly engaged
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,129</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>22,835</b>	<b>59.0</b>	<b>24,294</b>	<b>51.8</b>
<b>CHILD CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Sex</b>						
Female . . . . .	23,128	63.6	11,246	66.7	11,882	60.7
Male . . . . .	24,001	47.3	11,589	51.6	12,412	43.3
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>						
White alone . . . . .	35,908	55.3	17,423	59.3	18,485	51.4
Non-Hispanic . . . . .	27,557	54.3	13,084	58.3	14,473	50.6
Black alone . . . . .	7,322	53.9	3,436	56.2	3,886	51.8
Asian alone . . . . .	1,485	70.6	761	73.5	724	67.7
Hispanic (any race) . . . . .	9,153	58.5	4,757	61.8	4,396	54.8
<b>Parental Interaction</b>						
Praised three or more times per day . . . .	23,336	61.9	13,140	63.1	10,196	60.3
Praised less often . . . . .	23,793	48.9	9,694	53.6	14,098	45.7
Talk or play with parent three or more times per day . . . . .	24,210	61.0	13,173	61.7	11,037	60.1
Talk or play with parent less often . . . . .	22,918	49.3	9,662	55.4	13,256	44.9
All three television rules . . . . .	28,372	58.9	16,493	60.5	11,879	56.6
Less than all three television rules . . . . .	18,757	49.9	6,342	55.3	12,415	47.2
Eat dinner together 5 days per week or more . . . . .	38,261	57.0	19,864	59.5	18,397	54.3
Eat dinner together less than 5 days per week . . . . .	8,867	48.1	2,971	56.2	5,896	44.0
<b>Activities</b>						
Participate in sports . . . . .	20,224	57.9	9,072	61.3	11,152	55.2
Do not participate in sports . . . . .	26,904	53.4	13,762	57.6	13,142	49.0
Participate in lessons . . . . .	15,236	62.7	7,632	66.5	7,604	58.9
Do not participate in lessons . . . . .	31,893	51.8	15,203	55.3	16,690	48.6
Participate in clubs . . . . .	15,556	60.8	7,218	63.6	8,338	58.3
Do not participate in clubs . . . . .	31,573	52.6	15,617	56.9	15,956	48.4
Attend religious activities once a month or more . . . . .	27,869	58.2	14,146	61.4	13,723	55.0
Attend religious activities less than once a month . . . . .	19,259	51.1	8,689	55.2	10,570	47.7
<b>School experience</b>						
Ever changed schools <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	15,549	51.0	5,321	59.7	10,228	46.5
Never changed schools . . . . .	31,580	57.5	17,514	58.9	14,066	55.7
Ever suspended or expelled . . . . .	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,565	24.6
Never suspended or expelled . . . . .	NA	NA	NA	NA	21,728	55.0
In gifted classes . . . . .	9,091	69.7	3,091	73.3	6,000	67.8
Not in gifted classes . . . . .	38,038	51.9	19,744	56.8	18,294	46.6

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3.

# Percent of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Who Were Highly Engaged in School by Selected Characteristics: 2006—Con.

(Numbers in thousands)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent highly engaged	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent highly engaged	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent highly engaged
<b>FAMILY AND PARENT CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	32,670	57.3	16,204	60.8	16,466	53.9
Separated, divorced, widowed . . . . .	9,322	51.6	3,841	57.7	5,481	47.3
Never married . . . . .	5,135	49.2	2,789	50.6	2,346	47.6
<b>Parent's Educational Expectations</b>						
Would like child to go beyond high school . . . . .	44,825	56.4	21,859	59.8	22,966	53.2
Would like child to complete high school or less education . . . . .	2,303	33.7	975	42.6	1,328	27.1
Expect child to go beyond high school . . . . .	43,098	57.7	21,194	60.7	21,904	54.8
Expect child to complete high school or less education . . . . .	4,029	29.7	1,640	37.0	2,389	24.7
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Less than high school . . . . .	4,400	51.0	2,152	54.6	2,248	47.6
High school graduate . . . . .	13,352	52.4	6,247	55.8	7,105	49.4
Some college or more . . . . .	29,375	57.3	14,435	61.1	14,940	53.6
<b>Monthly Family Income</b>						
Under \$1,500 . . . . .	5,933	50.5	3,037	52.2	2,896	48.7
\$1,500 to \$2,999 . . . . .	8,696	52.8	4,427	57.9	4,269	47.6
\$3,000 to \$4,499 . . . . .	7,973	56.3	3,927	60.5	4,046	52.2
\$4,500 to \$5,999 . . . . .	6,646	54.5	3,170	56.0	3,476	53.1
\$6,000 and over . . . . .	17,032	58.1	7,854	62.9	9,178	53.9
Income not reported . . . . .	849	56.8	420	58.8	429	54.8
<b>Family Poverty Status<sup>3</sup></b>						
Below poverty level . . . . .	7,486	52.4	3,974	55.5	3,512	48.7
At or above poverty level . . . . .	38,793	55.9	18,440	59.8	20,353	52.3
100 to 199 percent of poverty . . . . .	10,544	54.9	5,317	58.7	5,227	51.0
200 percent of poverty or higher . . . . .	28,249	56.2	13,123	60.2	15,126	52.7
<b>Metro/Nonmetropolitan Residence</b>						
Metropolitan . . . . .	39,062	56.0	18,916	59.8	20,146	52.4
In central cities . . . . .	12,736	55.2	6,409	59.0	6,327	51.4
Outside central cities . . . . .	26,326	56.4	12,507	60.2	13,819	52.9
Nonmetropolitan . . . . .	8,067	52.0	3,919	55.4	4,148	48.8
<b>Region of Residence</b>						
Northeast . . . . .	8,504	58.1	4,234	62.8	4,270	53.4
Midwest . . . . .	10,376	52.4	4,819	54.7	5,557	50.5
South . . . . .	16,808	54.9	8,160	59.3	8,648	50.7
West . . . . .	11,440	56.5	5,621	59.6	5,819	53.6
<b>Total children, 2004 . . . . .</b>	<b>48,186</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>23,632</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>24,554</b>	<b>52.9</b>
<b>Total children, 2003 . . . . .</b>	<b>47,718</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>23,602</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>24,116</b>	<b>50.4</b>
<b>Total children, 2000 . . . . .</b>	<b>47,023</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>24,015</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>23,008</b>	<b>50.0</b>
<b>Total children, 1998 . . . . .</b>	<b>46,485</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>23,704</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>22,782</b>	<b>46.8</b>

<sup>1</sup> Does not include the normal progression and graduation from elementary and middle schools.<sup>2</sup> Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).<sup>3</sup> Includes only children in households for which poverty status was determined.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8 (2006 data); 2004 Panel, Wave 3 (2004 data); 2001 Panel, Wave 7 (2003 data); 1996 Panel, Waves 6 and 12 (1998 and 2000 data); Child Well-Being Topical Modules.



had some college or more education were more likely to be highly engaged (57 percent) than those with parents who had a high school degree (52 percent). Children from families with a monthly income of \$6,000 or more were more likely to be highly engaged (58 percent) than those with family incomes of less than \$1,500 per month (51 percent). Children living in metropolitan areas were more likely to be highly engaged (56 percent) than those living in nonmetropolitan areas (52 percent).

Parental characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes are also related to children's school engagement. For example, 62 percent of children who were praised three or more times per day were highly engaged in school, compared with 49 percent of children who were praised less often. Similarly, 61 percent of children whose parent talked or played with them for 5 minutes or more, 3 or more times per day, were highly engaged in school compared with 49 percent of children whose parent talked or played with them less often. Children whose parent placed restrictions on how much, how often, and how late they could watch television, were more likely to be highly engaged in school than those whose parents placed fewer or no restrictions on television viewing (59 percent and 50 percent, respectively). Fifty-seven percent of children whose parent ate dinner with them 5 or more days per week were highly engaged in school, compared with 48 percent of children whose parent ate dinner with them less often.

Children's activities are also associated with school engagement. Fifty-eight percent of children who participated in sports were highly engaged in school, compared with 53 percent of children who did not participate in sports. Sixty-three

percent of children who took lessons after school or on weekends were highly engaged in school, compared with 52 percent of those who did not take lessons. Sixty-one percent of children who participated in an after-school club were highly engaged in school, compared with 53 percent of those who did not. Children who attended a religious activity at least once a month were more likely to be highly engaged in school than those who attended less frequently—58 percent compared with 51 percent.

Children's school experience is also linked with school engagement. Children who had changed schools (aside from the normal progression or graduation) were less likely to be highly engaged in school (51 percent) than children who had never changed schools (58 percent). Among children 12 to 17 years old, only 25 percent of those who had ever been expelled or suspended were highly engaged in school, compared with 55 percent who had never been expelled or suspended. Conversely, all children in gifted classes were much more likely to be highly engaged in school than children not in gifted classes (70 percent and 52 percent, respectively).

These statistics indicate that the number of daily parent-child interactions and extent of participation in after-school activities are key to understanding what may motivate children to be more highly engaged in school beyond just passing into the next grade level.

### **Multivariate Analysis of Children Highly Engaged in School**

This analysis shows the relationship between children who are highly engaged in school and the level of parental interaction, after-school activities, and parent's educational

expectations, while taking into account more traditional demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, such as race, Hispanic origin, parent's marital status, parent's educational attainment, monthly family income, and metropolitan status. Logistic regression techniques were used to estimate the relative odds of children in different population groups being more highly engaged in school than children in the specified reference group.<sup>24</sup> The results, while not predicting causation, will show the relative importance of these indicators with respect to being highly engaged in school. An odds ratio of 1.0 indicates that a child with a select characteristic is as likely to be highly engaged as a child with the specified reference or comparison characteristic. Ratios under 1.0 or over 1.0 indicate that a child is less likely or more likely to be highly engaged, respectively.

Table 4 shows that while controlling for other factors, children 6 to 11 years old had greater odds (20 percent) of being engaged in school than children 12 to 17 years old. The odds of being highly engaged in school were twice as high for Asians as for non-Hispanic White children. Hispanic children also had greater odds (36 percent) of being highly engaged, compared with non-Hispanic White children.

Parental interaction makes a significant difference in the odds of children being highly engaged in school. When parents praise their 6- to 17-year-old children 3 or more times per day, children have greater odds of being highly engaged in school (38 percent), compared with children whose parents praise them less often. When parents talk or play with their child for 5 minutes

<sup>24</sup> The reference group was selected based on the bivariate distribution. The group that was least likely to be engaged or on-track was chosen as the reference group.

Table 4.

# **Odds of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Being Highly Engaged in School by Selected Child and Parent Characteristics: 2006**

(Universe: children enrolled in school)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance
<b>CHILD CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Age</b>						
6 to 11 years . . . . .	1.203	**				
12 to 17 years . . . . .	R					
<b>Sex</b>						
Female . . . . .	1.914	***	1.836	***	1.921	***
Male . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>						
Non-Hispanic White . . . . .	R		R		R	
Non-Hispanic Black . . . . .	1.111	n.s.	0.997	n.s.	1.336	*
Non-Hispanic Asian . . . . .	2.037	***	1.824	*	2.232	***
Non-Hispanic other race . . . . .	1.025	n.s.	0.965	n.s.	1.108	n.s.
Hispanic . . . . .	1.364	***	1.350	**	1.336	**
<b>Parental Interaction</b>						
Praised three or more times per day . . . . .	1.376	***	1.438	***	1.336	**
Praised less often . . . . .	R		R		R	
Talk or play with parent three or more times per day . . . . .	1.158	*	0.957	n.s.	1.424	***
Talk or play with parent less often . . . . .	R		R		R	
All three television rules . . . . .	1.175	**	1.079	n.s.	1.247	**
Less than all three television rules . . . . .	R		R		R	
Eat dinner together 5 days per week or more . . . . .	1.237	**	1.035	n.s.	1.303	**
Eat dinner together less than 5 days per week . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Activities</b>						
Participate in sports . . . . .	1.107	+	1.056	n.s.	1.120	n.s.
Do not participate in sports . . . . .	R		R		R	
Participate in lessons . . . . .	1.126	+	1.202	*	1.047	n.s.
Do not participate in lessons . . . . .	R		R		R	
Participate in clubs . . . . .	1.080	n.s.	1.087	n.s.	1.071	n.s.
Do not participate in clubs . . . . .	R		R		R	
Attend religious activities once a month or more . . . . .	1.195	**	1.211	*	1.163	+
Attend religious activities less than once a month . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>School experience</b>						
Ever changed schools <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	R		R		R	
Never changed schools . . . . .	1.231	***	0.946	n.s.	1.400	***
Ever suspended or expelled . . . . .	NA		NA		R	
Never suspended or expelled . . . . .					2.743	***
In gifted classes . . . . .	2.000	***	1.861	***	2.107	***
Not in gifted classes . . . . .	R		R		R	

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4.

# **Odds of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Being Highly Engaged in School by Selected Child and Parent Characteristics: 2006—Con.**

(Universe: children enrolled in school)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance
<b>FAMILY AND PARENT CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	1.131	+	1.157	n.s.	1.049	n.s.
Unmarried . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Less than high school . . . . .	0.989	n.s.	0.983	n.s.	0.972	n.s.
High school graduate . . . . .	1.013	n.s.	1.052	n.s.	0.943	n.s.
Some college or more . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Parent's Educational Expectations</b>						
Expect child to go beyond high school . . . . .	2.315	***	2.132	***	2.255	***
Expect child to complete high school or less education . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Monthly Family income</b>						
Under \$3,000 <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	R		R		R	
\$3,000 or more . . . . .	1.024	n.s.	1.046	n.s.	1.009	n.s.
<b>Metro/Nonmetropolitan Residence</b>						
Metropolitan . . . . .	1.003	n.s.	0.998	n.s.	1.031	n.s.
Nonmetropolitan . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Region</b>						
Northeast . . . . .	1.133	n.s.	1.137	n.s.	1.112	n.s.
Midwest . . . . .	0.938	n.s.	0.815	+	1.090	n.s.
West . . . . .	1.020	n.s.	0.956	n.s.	1.079	n.s.
South . . . . .	R		R		R	

R Reference group.

+ 0.05 ≤ p &lt; 0.1.

\* Significant at 0.01 ≤ p &lt; 0.05.

\*\* Significant at 0.001 ≤ p &lt; 0.01.

\*\*\* Significant at p ≤ 0.001.

n.s. Not statistically significant.

NA Not applicable. Question not asked for children 6 to 11 years old.

<sup>1</sup> Does not include the normal progression and graduation from elementary and middle schools.<sup>2</sup> Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).<sup>3</sup> Data only shown for people with reported family income.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8; Child Well-Being Topical Module.

or more, 3 or more times per day, children have greater odds of being highly engaged in school (16 percent). When parents limit children's television viewing with the following television rules (time of day, type of program and hours per day), children have greater odds (18 percent) of being highly engaged in school compared with children with fewer or no television rules. Children had about 24 percent greater odds of being highly engaged in school if they eat dinner with a parent 5 or more days

per week. All of these parent-child interactions are also significantly related to higher school engagement scores among children 12 to 17 years old.

Participation in activities outside of school is also associated with increased odds of being highly engaged in school. Children who participate in sports, take lessons, or attend religious activities once a month or more, have increased odds of being highly engaged. However, participation in clubs was

not significantly related to the odds of being highly engaged in school.

School experience played a role in the odds of children being highly engaged in school. Children who had never changed schools (aside from the normal progression of graduations) had about a 23 percent increase in their odds of being highly engaged in school. The odds for children in gifted classes or classes for advanced students were two times greater than those not in gifted classes for both age

groups. Children 12 to 17 years old who had never been expelled or suspended from school had odds of being highly engaged two and a half times greater than those who had been expelled or suspended. This association does not imply causation. Those who are highly engaged may have prepared themselves to have a more positive school experience.

Parental expectations may influence the extent to which children are engaged in school. The odds for children whose parents expect them to get some education beyond high school were more than double the odds for children whose parents had lower expectations. However, when looking at the more traditional socioeconomic indicators such as parental education, family income, and residential variables, no statistically significant relationships were found.

In sum, race, Hispanic origin, parental interaction, the child's school experiences, and parent's expectations contribute significantly to the odds of children being highly engaged in school, whereas typical correlates with child well-being such as parent's educational attainment, metropolitan status, and income do not. These findings suggest that children being highly engaged in school are not only the result of economic well-being. More active participation in familial and after-school activities by both children and parents is a contributing factor.

## ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

### Select Characteristics of Children Academically On-Track

A key indicator of children's well-being is academic performance in school. Children's academic performance is analyzed in this

report by looking at the relationship between the outcome of children being academically on-track (i.e. enrolled in school at or above the modal grade level for their age) and their daily interaction with parents, participation in extracurricular activities, academic experience, and parents' educational expectations.

Nationally, 79 percent of children 12 to 17 years old currently enrolled in school were academically on-track (Table 5). This represents a 4 percentage-point increase since 2003 and a 8 percentage-point increase since 1998. Although data are presented for all children 6 to 17 years old, characteristics of children 12 to 17 years old will be highlighted in this section because they have been in school longer and have more educational experience to draw upon.

Examining basic demographic characteristics of the children, girls were more likely to be on-track than boys (83 percent and 75 percent, respectively). Asians were more likely to be on-track (87 percent) than non-Hispanic White (80 percent), Hispanic (79 percent), and Black children (77 percent).<sup>25</sup> Children whose parents were married (81 percent) were more likely to be on-track than those with separated, divorced, or widowed parents (78 percent), or those with never-married parents (70 percent).

Several socioeconomic indicators of child well-being were related to children's progress in school. Children whose parent had some college or more education were more likely to be on-track (81 percent) than those with parents who had a high school degree (77 percent). The poverty status of

families was also related to whether children were on-track—74 percent of children living in families below the poverty level were academically on-track, compared with 82 percent of children living in families at 200 percent of poverty or higher. Children living in metropolitan areas were more likely to be on-track (80 percent) than children living in nonmetropolitan areas (75 percent). Since poverty and geographic characteristics may be indicative of the quality of school systems and educational resources in different areas, these differences may reflect the general quality of the school systems in these areas.

Unlike in the previous section, when positive parental interactions were related to higher school engagement scores for children, little evidence of the same relationship is found when examining these behaviors with children being academically on-track in school. Children 12 to 17 years old, whose parent ate dinner with them 5 days per week or more, were less likely to be on-track (78 percent) than children whose parent ate dinner with them less than 5 days per week (81 percent). Children whose parents put few, if any, restrictions on television viewing were more likely to be on-track (80 percent) than those whose parents placed more restrictions on their television viewing (78 percent).

More consistent findings emerged concerning children's participation in after-school activities and being academically on-track. Eighty-one percent of children 12 to 17 years old who participated in sports were more likely to be on-track, compared with 77 percent of children who did not participate in sports. Eighty-four percent of children who took lessons after school or on weekends were more likely to be on-track, compared to 77 percent who did not participate in lessons.

<sup>25</sup> Non-Hispanic White and Hispanic were not statistically different from each other; and Hispanic and Black were not statistically different from each other.

Table 5.

# Percent of Children Aged 6 to 17 Years Old Who Are Academically On-Track by Selected Characteristics: 2006

(Numbers in thousands)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track
<b>Total children, 2006</b> . . . . .	<b>47,129</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>22,835</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>24,294</b>	<b>79.1</b>
<b>CHILD CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Sex</b>						
Female . . . . .	23,128	85.6	11,246	88.4	11,882	83.0
Male . . . . .	24,001	80.0	11,589	84.9	12,412	75.4
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>						
White alone . . . . .	35,908	82.9	17,423	86.5	18,485	79.5
Non-Hispanic . . . . .	27,557	82.9	13,084	86.4	14,473	79.8
Black alone . . . . .	7,322	81.4	3,436	86.6	3,886	76.8
Asian alone . . . . .	1,485	88.4	761	90.1	724	86.5
Hispanic (any race) . . . . .	9,153	83.0	4,757	86.8	4,396	78.9
<b>Parental Interaction</b>						
Praised three or more times per day . . . .	23,336	84.1	13,140	87.7	10,196	79.5
Praised less often . . . . .	23,792	81.4	9,694	85.2	14,098	78.8
Talk or play with parent three or more times per day . . . . .	24,210	84.0	13,173	87.3	11,037	80.1
Talk or play with parent less often . . . . .	22,918	81.4	9,662	85.7	13,256	78.3
All three television rules . . . . .	28,372	83.1	16,493	86.6	11,879	78.1
Less than all three television rules . . . . .	18,757	82.3	6,342	86.6	12,415	80.1
Eat dinner together 5 days per week or more . . . . .	38,261	82.7	19,864	86.7	18,397	78.4
Eat dinner together less than 5 days per week . . . . .	8,867	82.9	2,971	86.3	5,896	81.2
<b>Activities</b>						
Participate in sports . . . . .	20,224	83.8	9,072	86.6	11,152	81.4
Do not participate in sports . . . . .	26,904	82.0	13,762	86.6	13,142	77.1
Participate in lessons . . . . .	15,236	86.0	7,632	88.3	7,604	83.7
Do not participate in lessons . . . . .	31,893	81.2	15,203	85.8	16,690	77.0
Participate in clubs . . . . .	15,556	85.6	7,218	88.6	8,338	83.0
Do not participate in clubs . . . . .	31,573	81.3	15,617	85.7	15,956	77.1
Attend religious activities once a month or more . . . . .	27,869	83.4	14,146	86.7	13,723	80.0
Attend religious activities less than once a month . . . . .	19,259	81.8	8,689	86.5	10,570	78.0
<b>School experience</b>						
Ever changed schools <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	15,549	80.2	5,321	83.8	10,228	78.4
Never changed schools . . . . .	31,580	84.0	17,514	87.5	14,066	79.6
Ever suspended or expelled . . . . .	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,565	69.8
Never suspended or expelled . . . . .	NA	NA	NA	NA	21,728	80.2
In gifted classes . . . . .	9,091	86.8	3,091	88.3	6,000	86.0
Not in gifted classes . . . . .	38,038	81.8	19,744	86.4	18,294	76.8

See footnotes at end of table.



Table 5.

**Percent of Children Aged 6 to 17 Years Old Who Are Academically On-Track by Selected Characteristics: 2006—Con.**

(Numbers in thousands)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track
<b>FAMILY AND PARENT CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	32,670	83.9	16,204	87.2	16,466	80.8
Separated, divorced, widowed . . . . .	9,322	81.1	3,841	85.4	5,481	78.0
Never married . . . . .	5,135	78.2	2,789	85.0	2,346	70.2
<b>Parent's Educational Expectations</b>						
Would like child to go beyond high school . . . . .	44,825	83.2	21,859	86.8	22,966	79.8
Would like child to complete high school or less education . . . . .	2,303	73.7	975	82.9	1,328	66.9
Expect child to go beyond high school . . . . .	43,098	83.6	21,194	86.8	21,904	80.4
Expect child to complete high school or less education . . . . .	4,029	74.2	1,640	84.2	2,389	67.3
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Less than high school . . . . .	4,400	77.0	2,152	80.9	2,248	73.2
High school graduate . . . . .	13,352	81.1	6,247	85.7	7,105	77.0
Some college or more . . . . .	29,375	84.4	14,435	87.9	14,940	81.0
<b>Monthly Family Income</b>						
Under \$1,500 . . . . .	5,933	77.8	3,037	82.9	2,896	72.4
\$1,500 to \$2,999 . . . . .	8,696	81.1	4,427	85.4	4,269	76.6
\$3,000 to \$4,499 . . . . .	7,973	83.5	3,927	88.5	4,046	78.6
\$4,500 to \$5,999 . . . . .	6,646	83.0	3,170	87.1	3,476	79.4
\$6,000 and over . . . . .	17,032	85.3	7,854	87.7	9,178	83.3
Income not reported . . . . .	849	73.1	420	84.3	429	62.2
<b>Family Poverty Status<sup>3</sup></b>						
Below poverty level . . . . .	7,486	78.8	3,974	82.8	3,512	74.2
At or above poverty level . . . . .	38,793	83.7	18,440	87.5	20,353	80.3
100 to 199 percent of poverty . . . . .	10,544	81.6	5,317	86.8	5,227	76.4
200 percent of poverty or higher . . . . .	28,249	84.5	13,123	87.8	15,126	81.7
<b>Metro/Nonmetropolitan Residence</b>						
Metropolitan . . . . .	39,062	83.6	18,916	87.4	20,146	80.0
In central cities . . . . .	12,736	82.8	6,409	86.8	6,327	78.7
Outside central cities . . . . .	26,326	84.0	12,507	87.7	13,819	80.6
Nonmetropolitan . . . . .	8,067	78.7	3,919	83.0	4,148	74.7
<b>Region of Residence</b>						
Northeast . . . . .	8,504	86.2	4,234	90.4	4,270	82.1
Midwest . . . . .	10,376	79.4	4,819	83.0	5,557	76.2
South . . . . .	16,808	81.3	8,160	85.3	8,648	77.5
West . . . . .	11,440	85.4	5,621	88.8	5,819	82.1

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 5.

# Percent of Children Aged 6 to 17 Years Old Who Are Academically On-Track by Selected Characteristics: 2006—Con.

(Numbers in thousands)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track	Number of children currently enrolled	Percent on-track
<b>Total children, 2004.....</b>	<b>48,186</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>23,632</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>24,554</b>	<b>72.6</b>
<b>Total children, 2003.....</b>	<b>47,718</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>23,602</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>24,116</b>	<b>74.9</b>
<b>Total children, 2000.....</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>23,008</b>	<b>71.8</b>
<b>Total children, 1998.....</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>22,782</b>	<b>71.1</b>

NA Not applicable. Data not tabulated for years.

<sup>1</sup> Does not include the normal progression and graduation from elementary and middle schools.<sup>2</sup> Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).<sup>3</sup> Includes only children in households for which poverty status was determined.

Note: Children are generally considered on-track when they are enrolled at or above the modal grade for their age (the grade in which most children of a given age are enrolled).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8 (2006 data); 2004 Panel, Wave 3 (2004 data); 2001 Panel, Wave 7 (2003 data); 1996 Panel, Waves 6 and 12 (1998 and 2000 data); Child Well-Being Topical Modules.

Children who participated in after-school clubs (83 percent) were more likely to be on-track than children who did not participate in after-school clubs (77 percent). Children who attended a religious activity at least once a month were more likely to be on-track (80 percent) than those who attended less often or not at all (78 percent).

More disruptive experiences adversely affecting school attendance such as suspension and expulsion are related to noticeably larger differences in school progress. Children who had ever been expelled or suspended were less likely to be on-track (70 percent) than children who had never been expelled or suspended (80 percent). Conversely, children in gifted classes were much more likely to be on-track than children not in gifted classes (86 percent and 77 percent, respectively).

## Multivariate Analysis of Children Academically On-Track

This analysis shows the relationship between children who are academically on-track in school and the level of parental interaction,

after-school activities, and parent's educational expectations, while controlling for demographic characteristics of the children, their parents, and the households they live in. It will show if the parental interaction and after-school activities, which were significantly and positively related to highly motivating children in school, persist to the same degree in keeping children academically on-track. The results, while not predicting causation, will show the relative importance of these indicators with respect to being on-track in school. An odds ratio of 1.0 indicates that a child with a select characteristic is as likely to be on-track as a child with the specified reference or comparison characteristic. Ratios under 1.0 or over 1.0 indicate that a child is less likely or more likely to be on-track, respectively.

Children 6 to 11 years old had greater odds (78 percent) of being academically on-track than children 12 to 17 years old (Table 6). Girls had 45 percent greater odds of being academically on-track than boys. This was similar to the findings from the school engagement index.

School experience is a key factor in the odds of children being academically on-track. Children 12 to 17 years old who were in gifted classes, and those who had never been suspended or expelled from school, had greater odds of being academically on-track than those who were not in gifted classes, or had been expelled from school (48 percent higher and 34 percent higher, respectively). Children 6 to 11 years old who had never changed schools had greater odds of being academically on-track (36 percent) than those who had changed schools. Participation in a club was the only after-school activity associated with the greater odds of being academically on-track and that was only for children 6 to 11 years old (26 percent).

Parental expectations greatly impact the odds of whether children 12 to 17 years old will be academically on-track. Children had about 42 percent greater odds of being academically on-track when parents had high expectations. This result may not be causal. It is likely that those who are highly engaged in school and on-track academically foster higher expectations from their parents.

Some, but not all, parental characteristics have shown to be related to whether or not children are academically on-track. Children 6 to 11 years old whose parents have some college or more had 56 percent greater odds of being academically on-track than children whose parent had less than a high school degree. Children 6 to 17 years old whose family income was \$3000 or more per month had 16 percent greater odds of being academically on-track than those with less family income. Children 6 to 17 years old had 18 percent greater odds of being academically on-track if they lived in a metropolitan area than a nonmetropolitan area. However, these latter two relationships were not evident for children in individual age groups (6 to 11 and 12 to 17 years old). Finally, children had greater odds of being academically on-track if they lived in the Northeast and the West compared with the South (33 percent and 30 percent, respectively). Those in the Midwest had 14 percent lower odds of being on-track than those in the South.

In sum, parent's educational attainment, family income, place of residence, school experience, and parent's expectations contribute significantly to the odds of children being academically on-track in school. Unlike the previous analysis of indicators that motivate children to be highly engaged in school, parent-child interaction and participation in after-school activities appear to be not significantly related to the more basic issue of keeping children in the modal grade for their age.

### **Parental Interaction and After-School Activities**

Two indices are created and shown in Table 7 based on the number of parental interactions children experience and the number of extracurricular activities in which they are participants. This index ranges from 0 to 4—the higher the number, the more different ways children experience interactions with parents on a daily basis or the more they participate in activities. For each index level, Table 7 shows the percentage of children who are highly engaged in school and who are academically on-track.

Students who scored highest on the parental interaction index (an index score of 4) were almost twice as likely to be highly engaged in school as those students who had the least amount of daily interaction with their parents (an index score of 0). However, they were no more likely to be on-track (84 percent compared with 82 percent, respectively).<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, children who had the highest score on the index of after-school activities were more highly engaged in school (66 percent) than children who had the lowest level of participation (45 percent). Positive, but smaller, differences were found in this instance between participation in activities and being on-track between the two groups at either end of the index (86 percent and 79 percent, respectively).

These findings suggest that parental interaction and children's activities may promote a great deal of enthusiasm for schoolwork among children, but may not be significantly related to the progress of children graduating each year to a higher grade. The characteristics related to being on-track are the

more basic indicators of parental educational and household income levels and residential and regional characteristics that could reflect resources of both families and school systems. The examination of both these measures provides a more complete picture of the well-being of children as they progress through their formative years in school.

### **SOURCE OF THE DATA**

The population represented (the population universe) in the 2004 SIPP is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals. The data in this report were collected from June through September 2006 in the eighth wave of the 2004 SIPP Panel. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized population in Census 2000).

Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs, information on other topics is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis.

### **ACCURACY OF THE DATA**

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. This means the 90 percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the

<sup>26</sup> The difference is not statistically significant.

Table 6.

# **Odds of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Being Academically On-Track in School by Selected Child and Parent Characteristics: 2006**

(Universe: children enrolled in school)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance
<b>CHILD CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Age</b>						
6 to 11 years . . . . .	1.776	***				
12 to 17 years . . . . .	R					
<b>Sex</b>						
Female . . . . .	1.451	***	1.319	*	1.531	***
Male . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>						
Non-Hispanic White . . . . .	R		R		R	
Non-Hispanic Black . . . . .	1.071	n.s.	1.160	n.s.	1.058	n.s.
Non-Hispanic Asian . . . . .	1.386	n.s.	1.273	n.s.	1.473	n.s.
Non-Hispanic other race . . . . .	0.942	n.s.	1.168	n.s.	0.849	n.s.
Hispanic . . . . .	1.112	n.s.	1.158	n.s.	1.061	n.s.
<b>Parental Interaction</b>						
Praised three or more times per day . . . . .	1.034	n.s.	1.234	n.s.	0.929	n.s.
Praised less often . . . . .	R		R		R	
Talk or play with parent three or more times per day . . . . .	1.043	n.s.	0.974	n.s.	1.090	n.s.
Talk or play with parent less often . . . . .	R		R		R	
All three television rules . . . . .	0.855	*	0.913	n.s.	0.819	*
Less than all three television rules . . . . .	R		R		R	
Eat dinner together 5 days per week or more . . . . .	0.882	n.s.	0.952	n.s.	0.844	n.s.
Eat dinner together less than 5 days per week . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Activities</b>						
Participate in sports . . . . .	1.041	n.s.	0.885	n.s.	1.151	n.s.
Do not participate in sports . . . . .	R		R		R	
Participate in lessons . . . . .	1.096	n.s.	1.023	n.s.	1.171	n.s.
Do not participate in lessons . . . . .	R		R		R	
Participate in clubs . . . . .	1.193	*	1.257	+	1.139	n.s.
Do not participate in clubs . . . . .	R		R		R	
Attend religious activities once a month or more . . . . .	1.042	n.s.	0.984	n.s.	1.066	n.s.
Attend religious activities less than once a month . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>School experience</b>						
Ever changed schools <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	R		R		R	
Never changed schools . . . . .	1.171	*	1.359	*	1.047	n.s.
Ever suspended or expelled . . . . .	NA		NA		R	
Never suspended or expelled . . . . .					1.345	*
In gifted classes . . . . .	1.378	***	1.127	n.s.	1.477	**
Not in gifted classes . . . . .	R		R		R	

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 6.

# **Odds of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Being Academically On-Track in School by Selected Child and Parent Characteristics: 2006—Con.**

(Universe: children enrolled in school)

	Total		6 to 11 years old		12 to 17 years old	
	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance	Odds ratio	Significance
<b>FAMILY AND PARENT CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	1.085	n.s.	1.015	n.s.	1.114	n.s.
Unmarried . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Less than high school . . . . .	R		R		R	
High school graduate . . . . .	1.227	+	1.382	+	1.127	n.s.
Some college or more . . . . .	1.333	*	1.562	*	1.205	n.s.
<b>Parent's Educational Expectations</b>						
Expect child to go beyond high school . . . . .	1.310	*	0.992	n.s.	1.415	*
Expect child to complete high school or less education . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Monthly Family Income</b>						
Under \$3,000 <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	R		R		R	
\$3,000 or more . . . . .	1.163	+	1.200	n.s.	1.129	n.s.
<b>Metro/Nonmetropolitan Residence</b>						
Metropolitan . . . . .	1.184	+	1.200	n.s.	1.182	n.s.
Nonmetropolitan . . . . .	R		R		R	
<b>Region</b>						
Northeast . . . . .	1.331	**	1.511	*	1.219	n.s.
Midwest . . . . .	0.864	+	0.819	n.s.	0.906	n.s.
West . . . . .	1.295	**	1.314	+	1.280	+
South . . . . .	R		R		R	

R Reference group.

+ 0.05 ≤ p &lt; 0.1.

\* Significant at 0.01 ≤ p &lt; 0.05.

\*\* Significant at 0.001 ≤ p &lt; 0.01.

\*\*\* Significant at p &lt; 0.001.

n.s. Not statistically significant.

NA Not applicable. Question not asked for children 6 to 11 years old.

<sup>1</sup> Does not include the normal progression and graduation from elementary and middle schools.<sup>2</sup> Married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (excluding separated).<sup>3</sup> Data only shown for people with reported income.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8; Child Well-Being Topical Module.

survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process—including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports—to minimize these errors. The SIPP weighting procedure uses ratio estimation,

whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different

surveys or data sources. The SIPP 2004 Panel Wave 8 experienced a 33.1 percent attrition of the original sample since Wave 1, which had a nonresponse rate of 14.9 percent.

For further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates including standard errors and confidence intervals, go to <[http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04\\_W1toW12\(S&A-10\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A04_W1toW12(S&A-10).pdf)> or contact Stephen Clark of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods



Table 7.

### Percent of Children 6 to 17 Years Old Who are Highly Engaged and On-Track in School by Parental Interaction Index and Participation in Activities Index: 2006

(Universe: children enrolled in school)

		Highly engaged	On-track
	Total	55.3	82.7
Parental interaction index <sup>1</sup>	0	35.3	81.6
	1	46.5	80.1
	2	53.8	82.7
	3	58.7	84.1
	4	65.2	83.8
Participation in activities index <sup>2</sup>	0	45.2	79.0
	1	53.6	81.4
	2	56.3	83.9
	3	61.7	85.5
	4	66.4	86.4

<sup>1</sup> Parental interaction index includes praise and/or talking or playing three or more times per day, dinner 5 days per week, and all three television rules.

<sup>2</sup> Participation in activities index includes sports, lessons, clubs, and religious activities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel, Wave 8; Child Well-Being Topical Module.

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Additional information on the SIPP can be found at the following Web sites: <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/> (main SIPP Web site), <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/workpaper/wp230.pdf> (SIPP Quality Profile), and <www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/usrguide/sipp2004.pdf> (SIPP User's Guide).

### MORE INFORMATION

The report and the detailed tables are available on the Internet at <www.census.gov>; search for child well-being data by clicking on the letter "C" in the "Subjects A to Z" section on the Web page and selecting "Children." The previous reports *A Child's Day: 2003 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being) (P70-109)*; *A Child's Day: 2000 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)*; and *A Child's Day: Home, School, and Play (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)* with 1994 data are also found on this page.

Other information on child well-being from the SIPP can be found in the following reports: Jason M. Fields and Kristin E. Smith, *Poverty, Family Structure and Child Well-Being: Indicators from the SIPP*, Population Division Working Paper Series, No. 23, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1998; Kristen E. Smith, Loretta E. Bass, and Jason M. Fields, *Child Well-Being Indicators from the SIPP*, Population Division Working Paper Series No. 24, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1998. These papers are also on the Internet on the "Population Division: Working Paper," section under "Subjects A to Z."

### CONTACT

For additional child well-being information, you may contact the authors of this report in the Fertility and Family Statistics Branch on 301-763-2416. You may also contact the authors of this report by e-mail.

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### USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of its data and reports. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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